

Aquinas FC - Code of Conduct for Coaches and Volunteers!

Introduction

At Aquinas Football Club, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all participants, particularly our young players. Coaches and volunteers play a critical role in this mission, and this Code of Conduct outlines the standards expected of everyone involved with the club. Adherence to these principles ensures the well-being of players and supports the club's values of fairness, respect, and professionalism.

General Responsibilities

All coaches and volunteers must:

- **Promote Positive Behaviors:** Set a good example for players and parents by maintaining high standards of behavior both on and off the field.
- **Treat Everyone with Respect:** Demonstrate respect towards all participants, including players, parents, officials, other coaches, and opposing teams.
- **Ensure Fair Play:** Encourage sportsmanship and ensure that all players have opportunities to participate, regardless of ability or background.
- **Comply with Club Policies:** Adhere to all club policies, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health & Safety Policy, and Equality and Inclusion Policy.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Coaches and volunteers must:

- **Prioritize Child Safety:** Ensure that the welfare of children is the top priority at all times. Any concerns about a child's safety or well-being must be reported to the club's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).
- **Maintain Appropriate Boundaries:** Always conduct yourself professionally when interacting with players. Avoid any behavior that could be perceived as inappropriate or exploitative.
- **Never Engage in Harmful Behavior:** Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, bullying, and neglect will not be tolerated in any form.
- **Respect Privacy and Consent:** Never take photographs or record videos of children without parental consent and do not share any personal information about players without proper authorization.

Player Development

Coaches must:

- **Focus on Learning and Enjoyment:** Create a safe and positive environment that promotes learning, development, and enjoyment of the game.
- **Provide Constructive Feedback:** Offer encouragement and constructive feedback to players, focusing on effort, improvement, and teamwork rather than just winning.

- **Adapt to Individual Needs:** Recognize the unique needs and abilities of each player, and strive to provide appropriate challenges and support for their development.
- **Promote a Balanced Lifestyle:** Encourage players to balance their football participation with other aspects of their life, including education, family, and other interests.

Health and Safety

Coaches and volunteers must:

- **Ensure a Safe Environment:** Take all necessary precautions to ensure that training sessions, matches, and other club activities are conducted safely.
- **Report Accidents and Incidents:** Report any injuries or safety concerns immediately and follow the appropriate protocols for dealing with accidents.
- **Supervision:** Always ensure that players are properly supervised during all club activities and never leave children unattended.
- **Risk Management:** Regularly assess potential risks during activities and take proactive steps to minimize hazards.

Behavior During Matches and Training

Coaches and volunteers must:

- **Respect Match Officials:** Show respect for referees and match officials at all times, both during and after matches. Any concerns should be raised in a respectful manner through the appropriate channels.
- **Promote Positive Behavior in Players:** Encourage players to respect their opponents and match officials, and to conduct themselves with dignity in both victory and defeat.
- **Discourage Misconduct:** Never tolerate violent conduct, foul language, or unsporting behavior from players, volunteers, or spectators. Address issues promptly and follow club procedures for dealing with misconduct.
- **Remain Calm Under Pressure:** Maintain composure in all situations and avoid reacting emotionally to incidents that occur during matches or training sessions.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Coaches and volunteers must:

- **Foster Inclusivity:** Promote equality by ensuring that no player, coach, or volunteer is discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.
- **Create a Welcoming Environment:** Ensure that all players, regardless of their background or ability, feel welcome and included within the club.
- **Challenge Discrimination:** Take a proactive stance against discrimination or exclusion, reporting any incidents to the DSO or appropriate authority.

Communication and Transparency

Coaches and volunteers must:

- **Maintain Clear Communication:** Keep players, parents, and fellow volunteers informed about schedules, events, and any relevant changes. Ensure communication is appropriate and professional at all times.

- **Be Accessible to Players and Parents:** Be available to discuss any concerns or questions from players or parents, and approach all conversations with openness and respect.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Respect the confidentiality of players' personal information and refrain from discussing sensitive issues outside of appropriate channels.

Compliance and Accountability

Coaches and volunteers must:

- **Comply with Legal and Regulatory Requirements:** Follow all relevant legal and regulatory requirements, including child protection, health and safety, and data protection laws.
- **Accept Responsibility:** Acknowledge that you are responsible for your actions and decisions, and accept the consequences of any breaches of this Code of Conduct.
- **Participate in Training:** Attend all required safeguarding and coaching training sessions, ensuring that you are up-to-date on best practices and club policies.
- **Report Violations:** If you observe a breach of this Code of Conduct by another coach, volunteer, or participant, you must report it to the club's management.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Suspension from coaching or volunteer duties
- Dismissal from the club

The club will follow a fair and transparent process when addressing any allegations of misconduct.

By adhering to this Code of Conduct, you are helping to ensure that Aquinas Football Club remains a positive and safe environment where young people can develop their football skills and grow as individuals. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to upholding these values.

This framework reflects the IFA's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the integrity of football while supporting coaches and volunteers in their essential roles at Aquinas Football Club.